

Testimony to the Public Service Commission

Tyeast Frank 1-20-2010

Ameren UE 18% rate increase

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Missouri Public
Service Commission

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Davis

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Good Evening, my name is Tyeast Frank; I am an Outreach Supervisor for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program for the Human Development Corporation of Metropolitan St. Louis.

I would like to speak to the impact that an 18% rate increase will have on those families who are need for adequate protections.

According to the 2000 census, 27.7 percent, (approximately 83,000 individuals) St. Louis city households live at or below the current poverty index or \$1338 per month for a family of three.

This year 17,200 families in St. Louis City have already received assistance from LIHEAP; compared to last year 15,200 families had received assistance for the entire program year. LIHEAP have assisted 2000 more recipients then last year and the program has not ended. At Human development Corporation we are servicing more under employed people, working people, and an over flow of new families to the program. We have had to deny a great deal of new families because of the guidelines to the LIHEAP program although the poverty guideline is 135%. The rate increase will directly affect those families whose income is near the LIHEAP guidelines but does not qualify for the program.

Many of these families are the working poor, who are struggling to survive on low or minimum wages. Last winter families at the states median income paid approximately 6% of their income to utilities, while the average low income family in Missouri paid 16% to 26% of their income to utilities. Poor housing stock and lack of weatherization often caused this energy burden to be even higher for those who can least afford to pay. As a result, families are choosing between necessities such as, medication, food, and transportation to work, and paying utilities. It also put many more families in a continuing cycle of cut-offs and restorations, where the service is disconnected as soon as the cold weather rule protection ends. Any rate increase will be an added burden on the most vulnerable customers.

I ask that you as commissioners take the steps necessary to protect the health and safety of all low income individuals in Missouri. By

- Considering an affordability program
- Consider to expand the weatherization program.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Witness Exhibit 17-1
120-120-10 PRR 17-ER-2010-003
Reporter RAH

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